

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 49 have been cancelled. Claims 50 through 74 have been added. Claims 50 through 74 remain in this application for active consideration.

During a telephone conference with applicant's undersigned attorney on July 23, 2003, Examiner Amiri agreed that in view of the previous confusions caused by applicants' attorney's misunderstanding of the status of the claims of the application, the best way to clarify the status of the claims would be to cancel all previous claims, including those added by the PTO staff, and to reassert and renumber the remaining claims beginning with claim number 50. This has been done by the foregoing amendment.

In the official action of November 4, 2002, the examiner objected to the drawings, objected to claims 8, 10 through 18, 26 through 28 and 32, rejected claims 1 through 10, 19 through 25 and 29 through 37 under 35 U.S.C. §112, rejected claims 1, 2, 19, 20, 30 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and rejected claims 3 through 10, 21 through 25, 29 and 35 through 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants respectfully traverse the stated objections and rejections and submit that in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, this application is now in condition for allowance.

With regard to the objection to the drawings set forth in the official action of November 4, 2002, a new sheet (1/9) of drawings including reference numeral 102 in Figure 1 was submitted with the Supplemental Amendment filed on June 26, 2003. In addition, new sheets of drawings (2/9 and 3/9) including correction of several minor typographical errors and omissions in Figures 2a and 3 were submitted with the Supplemental Amendment filed on June 26, 2003. In particular, Figure 2a was modified by changing reference numeral 136 to 137 and Figure 3 was modified by adding reference numeral 121 and changing reference numeral 136 to 137. It is respectfully requested that the examiner approve the corrections included in the new sheets of drawings submitted with the Supplemental Amendment filed on June 26, 2003.

Regarding the objections to the original claims, the remaining claims have all been amended so as to avoid any improper multiple dependencies. In addition, claim 68 has been amended so as to obviate the double recitation of the phrase "of the lid."

With regard to the rejection of claims 1 through 10, 19 through 25 and 29 through 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, corresponding claims 50 through 56 and 62 through 65 have all been amended so as to comply fully with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Regarding the art rejections, claims corresponding to claims 50, 51, 62 and 66 were rejected as being anticipated by Riedy et al., claims corresponding to claims 52 through 56 and 63 were rejected as being unpatentable over Riedy et al., and claim 22, which has been replaced by corresponding claim 64, was rejected as being unpatentable over Riedy et al. in view of UK Patent Publication GB 2229222 A. But the date of Riedy et al. as a reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) can be no earlier than its November 5, 1999 filing date, whereas the claims remaining in this application are fully supported by and therefore entitled to the priority of Australian application no. PP 9550 filed March 31, 1999. In this latter regard, it is to be noted that an appropriate claim for priority has been made in this application in the joint declaration signed by the inventors and filed on February 12, 2002. In addition, and pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.55(a)(1)(ii), an appropriate claim for priority was timely made and a certified copy of the priority application was timely filed in international application PCT/AU00/00280, of which the present application is a national stage application. A copy of Australian application no. PP 9550 was submitted with the February 4, 2003 amendment for the convenience of the examiner. In sum, since Riedy et al. is not prior art against the present application, all prior art rejections based thereon should be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of claim 29 (which has been replaced by corresponding new claim 65) as being unpatentable over UK Patent Publication GB 2229222 A, as is clearly

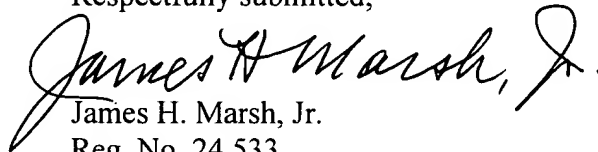
disclosed in the specification at page 10, line 30 through page 11, line 5, the rib of claim 65 acts as an edge trim for a floor covering. Moreover, as is clearly spelled out in claim 65, the chamfered edges on the rib and the lid provide a waterproof sealing fit. These features are neither disclosed nor suggested in UK Patent Publication GB 2229222 A. Accordingly it is clear that claim 65 is patentable over. UK Patent Publication GB 2229222 A.

Claims 31 through 33 were deemed to be directed to patentable subject matter in the November 4, 2002 office action. Similar subject matter is now presented in claims 67 through 69. Accordingly, these claims should be in condition for allowance.

Fewer independent claims and fewer claims total remain in this application than when the same was originally filed. Accordingly, it is submitted that no additional filing fee is due as a result of the foregoing amendments.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it submitted that it is clear that the claims remaining for active consideration in this application are free of the cited art, in full compliance with the patent statutes, rules and regulations regarding formalities, and in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable action at an early date will be appreciated. If the examiner is of the view that any issue remains unresolved, it is respectfully suggested that applicants' undersigned attorney may be contacted by telephone at the number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James H. Marsh, Jr.

Reg. No. 24,533

STINSON MORRISON HECKER LLP

1201 Walnut Street, Suite 2800

Kansas City, MO 64106-2150

Telephone: (816) 842-8600

Facsimile: (816) 691-3495